

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01
OPR-02 SY-05 MCT-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-08 AID-05
OC-06 CCO-00 SCS-06 IO-13 /107 W
-----095728 181535Z /43

O R 181501Z FEB 78 ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7026
USIA NIACT IMMEDIATE
DIA WASHINGTON NIACT
CIA WASHDC NIACT
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMBASSY BAGHDAD
CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 1710

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, IR

SUBJECT: RIOTS IN TABRIZ, ELSEWHERE OVER 40TH DAY ANNIVERSARY
OF QOM KILLINGS

SUMMARY: ON SATURDAY FEB. 18, RIOTING OCCURRED IN TABRIZ MARKING
40TH DAY OF MOURNING FOR THOSE KILLED IN QOM DISTURBANCES JAN 9.
GUNFIRE HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD IN THE CITY AND TROOPS ARE ON ALERT.
IRAN-AMERICAN SOCIETY (IAS) BINATIONAL CENTER HAD ALL WINDOWS BROKEN,
BUT EXCEPT FOR THIS INCIDENT RIOTS HAVE NOT REPEAT NOT TAKEN ANTI-
U.S. TURN, AND CONSULATE TABRIZ REPORTS ALL AMERICANS ARE SAFE AS OF
5 P.M. LOCAL TIME FEB 18. SHIRAZ SAW MINOR DISTURBANCES. END
SUMMARY

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1. IN WAKE OF ORDER TO CLOSE TABRIZ BAZAAR GIVEN BY LOCAL RELIGIOUS
LEADERS TO COMMEMORATE 40TH DAY AFTER QOM INCIDENTS OF JAN 9, TABRIZ
CONSULATE REPORTS MASSIVE CROWDS NUMBERING IIN THOUSANDS TOOK TO
STREETS WITH ROCKS AND PERHAPS OTHER WEAPONS. DISTURBANCES BEGAN
EARLY IN MORNING, AND BY 9:30 OR 10:00 A.M. FIRING, INCLUDING MACHINE
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GUN BURSTS, WAS HEARD THROUGHOUT CITY. ARMY TROOPS WERE DEPLOYED.

HEAVY MORNING FIRING HAD GIVEN WAY TO RANDOM SHOOTING BY AFTERNOON, INCLUDING REPORTED SNIPER FIRE FROM UNIVERSITY AREA OF CITY. TABRIZ UNDER CURFEW EVENING FEB 18.

2. AT ABOUT 2:30 P.M., IAS BINATIONAL CENTER WAS ATTACKED AND ALL WINDOWS WERE BROKEN. NO ONE WAS IN BUILDING AT TIME, AND CROWD DID NOT ENTER. ELSEWHERE IN TABRIZ, EYEWITNESSES HAVE REPORTED SUBSTANTIAL BREAKAGE OF WINDOWS AND MANY BUILDINGS WERE SEEN BURNING DURING DAY. SEVERAL BANKS WERE APPARENTLY GUTTED, INCLUDING BANK SEPAH AND BANK SADERAT. INTERNATIONAL HOTEL HAD ALL ITS WINDOWS SMASHED AND SOME FOREIGN (NOT REPEAT NOT AMERICAN) TOURISTS WERE REPORTEDLY ROUGHED UP. U.S. TAFT TEAMS REPORT IRANIAN ARMY HAS BEEN PUT ON ALERT. TAFT TEAMS ARE NOT REPEAT NOT LEAVING BASES FOR TIME BEING. CONSULATE TABRIZ HAS CAUTIONED AMERICANS TO REMAIN AT HOME. CONSULATE ITSELF HAS BEEN UNDER REINFORCED POLICE PROTECTION SINCE 11. A.M. FEB 18, IN ADDITION TO NORMAL POLICE GUARD.

3. EYEWITNESS REPORTS AT LEAST ONE IRANIAN WOMAN IN TABRIZ WAS DRAGGED FROM HER CAR AND BEATEN BECAUSE SHE WAS NOT RPT NOT WEARING CHADOURX (LONG ISLAMIC VIEL-ROBE). CONSULATE TABRIZ BELIEVES THERE HAVE BEEN CASUALTIES, BS NOT PREPARED TO SAY HOW MANY AT THIS POINT. RUMORS ARE BEGINNING TO BOUNCE ABOUT, BUT HARD FACTS NOT NOW AVAILABLE.

4. TEHRAN AND ISFAHAN WERE QUIET, WITH NO INCIDENTS REPORTED. IN SHIRAZ, BAZAAR WAS CLOSED MORNING FEB. 18, AND POLICE BROKE UP DEMONSTRATION WITH CLUBS, ACCORDING TO CONSULATE SHIRAZ. THERE WERE ALSO RUMORS OF TROUBLE AT SHIRAZ' PAHLAVI UNIVERSITY, BUT CONSUL HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THIS.
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5. IRANIAN POLICE TELL SY AND OSI PRIVATELY THAT DISTURBANCES ALSO OCCURRED AT QOM AND ABIDAN FEB. 18, BUT DID NOT PROVIDE DETAILS. NATIONAL IRANIAN RADIO AND TELEVISION (NIRT) BROKE STORY FIRST ON 5 P.M. NEWS SHOW, SAYING "COMMUNISTS AND ISLAMIC-MARXISTS" HAD RIOTED IN TABRIZ AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN PROPERTY DAMAGE.

6. EMBASSY COMMENT: DIMENSIONS OF DISTURBANCE AT TABRIZ CLEARLY CITY-WIDE AND ATTESTED TO BY NUMBER OF DIFFERENT SOURCES. LEVEL OF VIOLENCE SURPRISING, AND THOUGH IT IS NOT RPT NOT YET KNOWN WHETHER MOBS WERE ARMED BEYOND NORMAL (FOR IRAN) STICKS AND STONES, INTENSITY AND DURATION OF FIRING SUGGEST MORE THAN USUAL OPPOSITIONIST ACTIVITY

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REASONS FOR THIS AND SCALE AND SPREAD OF RELATED ACTIVITY ELSEWHERE IN IRAN WILL BE EXPLORED IN DAYS TO COME.
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition History: n/a
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